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PERES SEES EFFORT IN U.S. SPY INQUIRY TO MAR ISRAELI TIES

Assails Those Who 'Foul the Atmosphere' — Reiterates Promise of Assistance

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Special to The New York Times

JERUSALEM, June 8 — Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel today denounced attempts to "foul the atmosphere" between Israel and the United States with suggestions that Israeli spying in America was far more extensive than Israel has said it was.

Mr. Peres's statement was his first public comment on the espionage issue since Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former American Navy analyst, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to conspiring with Israeli agents to steal secret Government documents.

The Prime Minister reiterated his country's readiness to cooperate with the United States to investigate the affair. He did not say who was trying to foul the atmosphere with false reports but said "the Government of Israel views these reports with concern and hopes they will not continue."

Comments by F.B.I. Director

His remarks followed a comment in Washington last week by William H. Webster, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that Israel had given only "selective cooperation" in the investigation of Mr. Pollard, and reports by senior Administration officials that Mr. Pollard had begun providing information about a number of Israeli espionage operations in the United States.

Mr. Peres's statement, issued with the approval of the full Cabinet, provided no new evidence to back up assertions by the Israeli Government that spying by Mr. Pollard, on behalf of Israeli agents, was a "rogue" operation, undertaken by a small scientific intelligence-gathering unit without the knowledge of Israeli politicians.

No Details on Israeli General

Nor did it explain how a senior Israeli Air Force commander, Brig. Gen. Aviem Sella, could have been intimately involved in the Pollard affair while on a "study leave" in the United States, without the knowledge of his superiors — the head of the Air Force, the

Chief of Staff and the Minister of Defense.

Four Israelis were named as co-conspirators in the Pollard case — General Sella; Rafael Eitan, a veteran intelligence operative; Joseph Yagur, the science attaché at the Israeli Consulate General in New York, and Irit Erb, a secretary in the Israeli Embassy in Washington. All four are now working in Israel.

Mr. Pollard's wife, Anne Henderson Pollard, pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of unauthorized possession of classified documents.

The Prime Minister's statement was in keeping with a general attitude among Israeli officials that elements within the Justice Department and F.B.I. want to harm Israel's relations with the United States by exaggerating the breadth of the Pollard affair.

'Out to Get Israel'

The Israeli Defense Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, asserted in a speech Saturday that there were elements in the Reagan Administration "who are out to get Israel."

"I don't know what is motivating and impelling certain echelons in the U.S. Administration to go after Israel," Mr. Rabin said, "but taken together the latest events in the United States form a picture which should cause us concern."

The Prime Minister's statement put it less directly: "U.S.-Israel relations are marked by closeness, and it is inconceivable that attempts to foul the atmosphere between them should succeed."

"In recent weeks we have witnessed a wave of unfounded reports regarding ostensible espionage affairs and Israeli arms deals. The Government of Israel views these reports with concern, and hopes they will not continue."

Mr. Peres was apparently referring to a retired Israeli general who was recently charged by the United States with conspiring to sell \$2 billion in American-made weapons to Iran. Israeli officials have denied that the retired general, Abraham Bar-Am, had any links with the Israeli Government.

"During the examination of the Pollard affair, the statement continued, "there was sincere cooperation on the part of the Israel Government. The Government of Israel is committed to the continuation of this cooperation, which is based on the relations of trust that prevail between the two countries."

Intelligence Unit Dismantled

The statement added that Israel had dismantled the intelligence apparatus run through the Scientific Liaison Bureau, "that exceeded its authority, as emerged in the wake of the Pollard affair."

In conclusion, the statement said: "Israel reiterates that no espionage activities are conducted against the

United States on its behalf. The Government of Israel is in close touch with the U.S. Administration in order to bring about the clarification of the various topics that have come up recently."

In Washington today, the State Department issued a response saying, "The United States welcomes and accepts the renewed pledge of the Government of Israel to continue cooperating with United States investigations of the Pollard case." But a spokesman had no comment on the allegation of efforts to harm relations between the two countries.

A spokesman for the Justice Department, John Russell, refused to comment on Mr. Peres's statement.

Concern With News Reports

A senior Israeli cabinet official, briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting today, said the statement "could be seen as an Israeli appeal for an end to recent reports in the U.S. media concerning the affair, which had an anti-Israel tone."

The official's comment indicated that there still did not seem to be much awareness at the Cabinet level that Israel has a serious credibility problem in Washington, which is rooted not only in reports of the Pollard case but in its own seemingly less than straightforward explanations of the spy affair.

The belief in official circles in Jerusalem is that some Israeli officials made a mistake, but that Israel apologized and more or less cooperated with an American investigation, so now the matter should be dropped. Those elements within the American Government or news media who seem not to believe certain aspects of the Israeli explanation are seen as being "anti-Israel."

In a long article in today's Haaretz newspaper, Israel's leading military writer, Ze'ev Schiff, argued that Israel's ministers simply have not come to grips with the implications of the spy scandal.

'Cry Out for an Answer'

"Does everyone in Israel's intelligence community do what it wants and on the political echelon nobody utters a peep from their mouths?" Mr. Schiff asked. "These are the questions that cry out for an answer and a serious internal investigation."

One way to behave, Mr. Schiff added, is to "blame the Americans, who have the nerve to complain that we spied inside their intelligence services and even dare to leak the details of the scandal to the press — while we here at home divert the public's attention with stories about the great bravery and natural honesty of those involved in this affair — as if that was the question we were dealing with."

"The other approach," he added, "is to investigate fundamentally the circumstances of the internal failure and not just issue statements saying that everything is O.K. Some people might try to argue that the Pollard affair is a media event and will soon be forgotten, but that is not the measure for the amount of damage it has done."